OFFICIAL MARVEL ZOMBIE™ MAGAZINE!

MARVEL AGE®

$1.00 US
$1.25 CAN
105
OCT
UK 65p

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BEWARE THE NEW MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS SERIAL (IT'S A KILLER!) BY PETER DAVID AND SAM KIETH STARRING —

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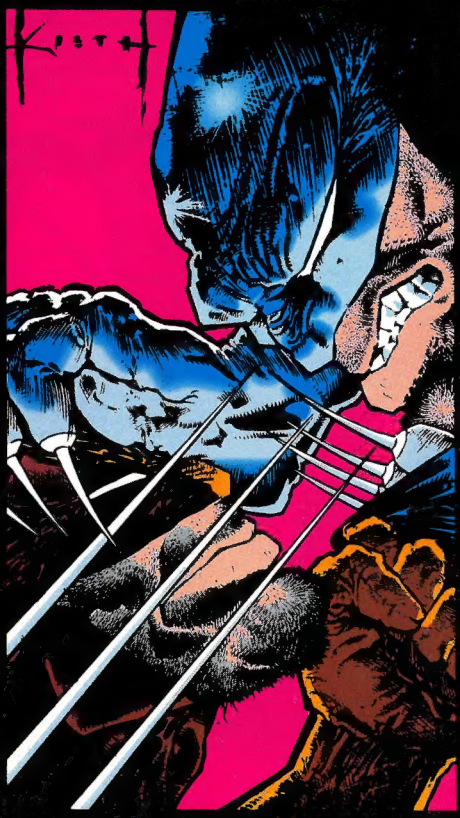

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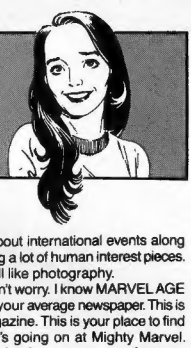


Have you ever rolled out of bed in the morning expecting a perfectly normal day, only to arrive at work and have something entirely unexpected hit you in the face!?

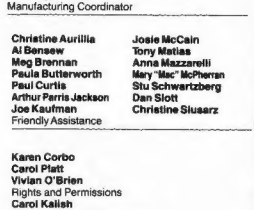
It's happened to me. . .the day I became the editor of MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE!

Now, don't get me wrong. I'm happy about it. This is an information mag, and being an information gatherer has been one of my jobs for some time. See, while working for several small newspapers in Texas, I did everything from getting the story, writing it, taking pictures, developing the pictures, typesetting the stories, and pasting them up! *Whew!* Even now, I still freelance as a writer, covering boxing stories with my partner, Dr. Lawrence McNamee, and writing about international events along with doing a lot of human interest pieces. And, I still like photography.

But don't worry. I know MARVEL AGE isn't like your average newspaper. This is *your* magazine. This is your place to find out what's going on at Mighty Marvel. We intend to have many new features in the next few months to accommodate your hungry zombie minds. And, since this is your forum too, write Mike Lackey and tell us what you think.

So, who knows, maybe we'll hit you in the face with a few unexpected things. But, if you're real nice, we'll use a pillow.

—Renee



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MARVEL AGE™ Vol. 1, No. 105, October, 1991. (ISSN #8750-4367) Published by MARVEL COMICS, Terry Stewart, President; Stan Lee, Publisher; Michael Hobson, Group Vice President, Publishing. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y 10016. **SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, N.Y. AND AT ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES.** Published monthly.

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ITEM! Coming at you faster than Makkari is Marvel's new CAPTAIN PLANET AND THE PLANETEERS limited series! Based on the smash hit program on Super-Station WTBS, this six-issue limited series is super hero action with an environmental theme. The first issue is an adaptation of the pilot episode, in which the Planeteers, a group of environmentally conscious young people set up shop on Hope Island, and create the being known as Captain Planet! Meanwhile, the evil villain Haggish Greedly drills offshore for oil, causing untold damage to the oceans. Other nemesis will include: Duke Nukem, a radioactive villain! Dr. Blight: a female mad scientist who's up to no good! Looten Plunder: a wealthy industrialist who employs Argos Bleak, a mercenary who just doesn't care!

This environmentally sound package comes to you from Barry Dutter (who has never polluted in his life!), Jim Salicrup (who doesn't even think about using plastic bags at the supermarket!), Jose Delbo (who once thought about not using the waste-paper basket, but did anyway!), and editor Rob Tokar (who makes certain that he turns out the lights whenever he leaves the room!)

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ITEM! Have you ever been discussing your favorite characters with friends and gotten into the ridiculous argument of who could beat who? "Oh, the Cenobites could cream the Night Breed!" you say, until your buddy snaps back with "No way! Boone could kick Pin-Head's butt!" Well, EPIC Comics has decided to see who would come out on top of a situation like this, staging the war to settle the score in the upcoming JIHAD limited series!

Now get this straight, JIHAD isn't a HELLRAISER/NIGHT BREED crossover as much as it's a HELLRAISER/NIGHT BREED war! If you check your Webster's Dictionary, you'll find that "jihad" is defined as "a holy war, or crusade."

The action begins when a new faction of Cenobites usurps Pinhead's authority in Hell, and the new faction that takes over is even more insidious! The mutinous Cenobites garner a large following, and the hellions then start their crusade against the Night Breed! At first, they're content with picking off a few of the smaller monsters in the Breed, but once they get started, it's soon all out pandemonium!

But why are these Cenobites so intent on destroying the Breed? Is it that they are more closely related than either of them would care to think? Or is there an even grander scheme in the works? Writer (and former HELLRAISER editor) D.G. Chichester knows, but he's not telling. The series is fully painted by Paul Johnson and his mouth is sewn shut! Editor Gregory Wright decapitated Managing Editor Rob Tokar so he wouldn't talk about the shocking ramifications this limited series will have on future issues of both titles!

Each 48-page issue sells for $4.50.

ITEM! There's no keeping down a master of Sinanju, as Remo Williams, the DESTROYER, discovers in the first issue of his upcoming four-issue limited series. The 48-page, full color story is written by Warren Murphy, the man who actually created the Remo Williams character, penned several of the books and even writes screenplays for such big Hollywood productions as *Lethal Weapon 2*.

In the opening installment, entitled *"The Terror Master,"* Remo's mentor Chiun learns that his first disciple, Nuihc (that's Chiun, backward!), has formed a terrorist training group. The former pupil is now the Dark Master of Sinanju, and only Remo can thwart his evil plans! It's drawn by Mike Harris, and inked by Fred Fredericks! Glenn Herdling does the editing thing and Jerome Moore furnishes a wonderful cover.

Also on the Remo Williams front, a trade paperback will be released this fall, representing the first three issues of The DESTROYER's black and white magazine. The stories will be in full color for the first time, and Dorian Vallejo (son of Boris) is providing a beautiful, painted cover. It sells for $9.95!

ITEM! In MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE #104, we featured an article on the new X-MEN action figures produced by the fine folks at Toybiz. Since no photos were available at press time, we had to wait until now to show you these great figures! Look at the tail on Nightcrawler! Hey, Magneto, you're making my fillings throb! Don't point those things at me, Wolverine! Seriously though, each figure has its own special features, especially Cyclops, who's a real blast!

ITEM! When this reporter last spoke with Design Director of Advertising and Promotion *(whew!)* Mariano Nicieza, he mentioned that the finishing touches are being put on the first WAM! (Wild Agents of Marvel, and shame on you if you didn't know!) Newsletter. The issue will focus on this fall's coming crop of "Horror Projects" which are guaranteed to chill your bones, as well as more inside information about Marvel than you can shake a Mjolnir at. There's still time to join up, so don't delay! To enlist as a Wild Agent, just send a check or money order of $12.95 to:

WAM!
c/o Marvel Comics Group
387 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10016

ITEM! Spidey croaks!

That's right, Marveloids! The ever-amazing one actually bites the dust in SPIDER-MAN #17! In this special issue of Marvel's most awesome spider-title, former DAREDEVIL-scribe Ann Nocenti takes the wall-crawler on a journey like he's never had before — a stroll through the after life! (Boy — talk about too many hyphens!) Artist Rick Leonardi fills in for Todd McFarlane, supplying some truly dizzying work! See Spider-Man fight for his life! See the webbed wonder duke it out with the embodiment of Death! See more barbecue sauce than should be allowed in a comic book! Don't say we didn't warn you, because this will be one of the surprises of the year!

ITEM! Readers of *Entertainment Weekly* and fans of MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE cross-over! That's right, Marveloids! If you peruse the July 6, 1991 issue of the aforementioned weekly, you'll spy an article on favorite book stores of popular writers. Well, New York City's Village Comics made

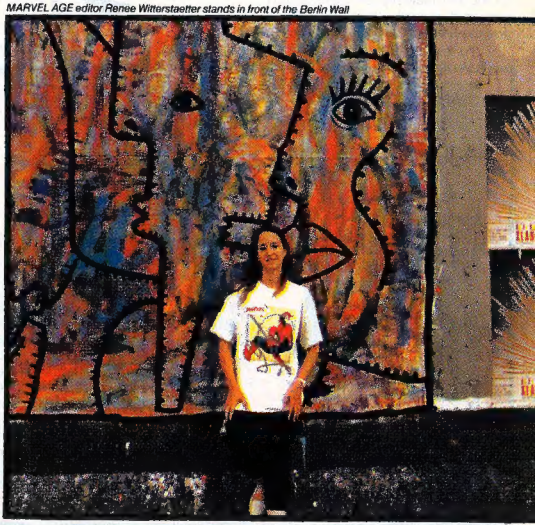
Photo by Thom O'Connor

the list, and in a pictorial of the shop you'll see MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE #103, right there in living color! Stay watchful, Marveloids, and let us know if you spot MARVEL AGE in any features in your local paper.

We'll stage our own MARVEL AGE media watch!

ITEM! In the Mondo Marvel column of MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE #101, we reported on the journey to the Berlin Wall by then-MARVEL AGE-colorist, now-MARVEL AGE-editor Renée Witterstaetter. Witness the splendor of the brightly colored wall —! Gasp at the pageantry of the Klangwolke! And that Spidey T-shirt's not too shabby, either!

MARVEL AGE editor Renee Witterstaetter stands in front of the Berlin Wall



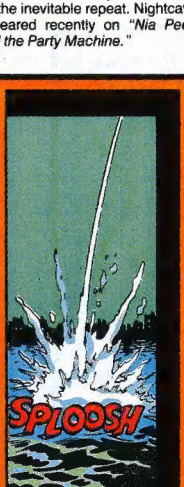
ITEM! The popular lunchtime pastime as of late in the Marvel Bullpen has been an untitled "Videofest," in which any of the men and women at 387 Park Avenue South bring in videos to ogle over assorted BLT's and sushi-burgers. The crowd usually gathers at around 12:30, and the more violent and/or silly the fare is the better. So far, Japanese animated films have proven the unmitigated favorites (along with pro-wrestling), with such features as *Ultra-Man, Devil Man Part 2,* and the infamous *Kamen Rider-Black RX.*

For some reason, the very phony rubber monsters just keep on exploding during *Kamen Rider,* to the frenzied approval of the crowd. Who should be touring the Marvel offices at that very moment, but the very future of horror — Mr. Clive Barker! EPIC assistant editor Tom Daning introduced this reporter to Clive, and we stopped for a moment to enjoy a particularly funny bit about a guy with a rubber fly head exploding into a million pieces.

Clive laughed, and said, "That's wonderful!" He then agreed to do the cover to our next MARVEL AGE issue, and granted us an exclusive interview, right after he finishes his promotional tour of the United States! As the Cenobites would say, "Keep your eyes peeled for it!"

ITEM! In other media-watch fronts, Stan Lee and Nightcat appeared recently on ABC-TV's *"Into The Night"* program, hosted by Rick Dees. The duo were a smash, and if you missed it the first time, check your local listings for the inevitable repeat. Nightcat also appeared recently on *"Nia Peebles and the Party Machine."*

Photo Courtesy of "Big Brother Love" Barry Dutter



MARVEL® TOP TEN

The hero and the villain are slugging it out on top of, say, the George Washington Bridge, the villain miscalculates his judo kick, misses the hero and loses his balance, and falls to his or her doom. The hero/heroine dives into the chilly waters, but finds no sign of the fiend. "Nobody could've survived that!" he/she says, and wander back home until the villain appears next time! Here's a list of ten evil bad guy-types who fell to their seeming dooms into the chilly waters of New York.

1. Stegron, the Dinosaur Man
2. The Big Wheel
3. The Hitman
4. Hammerhead
5. Bushmaster
6. Hobgoblin 1
7. Goldbug
8. Molten Man
9. The Black Cat
10. Mr. Fear

And, with that silliness out of the way, here is a list of Marvel's Top Ten Selling titles for March, 1991!

1. SPIDER-MAN #12
2. INFINITY GAUNTLET #1
3. GHOST RIDER #15
4. UNCANNY X-MEN #278
5. DEATHLOK #1
6. AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #349
7. MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #81
8. MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #80
9. X-FACTOR #68
10. NEW MUTANTS ANNUAL #11

MARVEL® TRIVIA QUIZ

Some readers love crossovers and guest-star appearances; other fans complain that it overexposes popular characters. This month, we'll see just how well those guest appearances stick in your mind! Most of the civilized comics-reading world follows the exploits of Logan in UNCANNY X-MEN, WOLVERINE and MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS. But did you so sufficiently savor Wolverine's following appearances in other series that you can answer the twelve trivia questions below? Answers on page 32!

— Brian Nelson

1. FANTASTIC FOUR #349: as a member of the "new" FF, Wolverine uses his claws to assist in the "birth" of:
A) a new heir to the Skrull throne
B) a Skrull technotroid
C) a Skrull Supreme Intelligence
D) the blues

2. MARVEL FANFARE #54: Wolverine is kidnapped by Dr. LeSeig, a renegade scientist specializing in human/animal mergers, in a sly storytelling homage to what famous fantasy author?
A) H.G. Wells
B) Jules Verne
C) A.E. Van Vogt
D) Dr. Seuss

3. NEW MUTANTS #94: the battle between Wolverine and Cable is interrupted when:
A) Rictor drops a water tower on them
B) Boom Boom sets off time bombs in their pants
C) Rahne has a nervous breakdown
D) HBO shows "*The Road Warrior*"

4. INCREDIBLE HULK #340: And who interrupted this ferocious battle between Wolverine and the Hulk?
A) Clay Quartermain
B) Betty Ross
C) The Leader
D) the Committee against Violence in Children's Television

5. DAREDEVIL #249: Wolverine and Daredevil each find themselves in search of:
A) the Punisher
B) Bullet
C) Bushwacker
D) better pizza

6. POWER PACK #27: for their own safety, Wolverine orders the Power kids out of:
A) the Danger Room
B) the Morlocks tunnels
C) Four Freedoms Plaza
D) bed

7. MEPHISTO #3: Who saved Wolverine's soul from the clutches of the Lord of the Underworld?
A) Rogue
B) Psylocke
C) Magik
D) Jimmy Swaggart

8. WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #29: Wolverine urges Peter Parker not to hold himself responsible for the death of:
A) Uncle Ben
B) Gwen Stacy
C) Ned Leeds
D) anyone in the Silver Age of Comics

9. CAPTAIN AMERICA ANNUAL #8: Wolverine saves the life of the son of which famous Golden Age figure?
A) Golden girl
B) Namora
C) the Whizzer
D) Rex, the Wonder Dog

10. ALPHA FLIGHT #53: Wolverine recalls an experiment gone wrong, an experiment in which James Hudson inadvertently created:
A) Bedlam
B) Goblyn
C) Box
D) Play-Doh

11. MARVEL TREASURY EDITION #26 featured a bar room brawl between Wolverine and:
A) Colossus
B) Hercules
C) Callisto
D) John Madden

12. IRON FIST #15: Wolverine takes on the Living Weapon while wearing a costume he acquired from:
A) Erik the Red
B) Mesmero
C) Fang

THE ETERNALS

THE HEROD FACTOR

Approximately one million years ago (give or take a few years), the Celestials came to Earth and began a series of genetic experiments on humankind. These experiments led to the creation of three separate races: *Eternals* — beings able to manipulate nearly limitless amounts of cosmic energy, *Humans* —the race of common men and women, and *Deviants* — the subterranean race of disfigured mutants (not to be confused with the Morlocks found in New York sewers and subway tunnels). Throughout the ages, Eternals and Deviants have been at odds with each other, and mankind has been virtually unaware of their presence. But now a secret must be revealed. An ancient scroll has been unearthed, and the prophecy it foretells marks the end of the war between the Eternals and the Deviants . . .

. . . Or does it? The prophecy tells of twins born to conquer and rule the combined kingdoms of Eternal and Deviant. The twins are the product of the union between an Eternal and a Deviant, hidden amidst the population of mankind. To make matters worse, a horrible monster has been sent out into the world to ensure that the prophecy never comes true. As innocent siblings die at the claws of the mysterious Beast, Ikaris, Thena, Sprite, Sersi, Makkari, Phastos, and their Deviant allies — Ransak and Karkas — must race to solve the riddle of the prophecy, before all hope of peace is lost.

As the Eternals search for the missing twins, the Deviants have problems of their own. *Lemuria* — the Deviant subterranean city — is in turmoil! Kro has abandoned his throne, Brutus has been vanquished, and anarchy reigns. Public executions are rampant, as angry Deviant mobs call for the destruction of anything that was once associated with the priesthood and dictatorship of Ghaur (Ghaur's tyranny ended in issue #12 of the last ETERNALS limited series). The situation is much like the chaos of the French Revolution — with a twist! The prophecy of the scroll could save the Deviants from their own self destruction and it could end the strife that has always existed between Eternal and Deviant. But someone or something does not want to see the prophecy come true!

"The Herod Factor" is the newest chapter in the ongoing saga of the Eternals, and it is brought to you by the creative team of Roy and Dann Thomas, Mark Texeira, and Bob McLeod. It chronicles the fate of the Eternals after this summer's AVENGERS ANNUAL and WEST COAST AVENGERS ANNUAL. Roy and Dann Thomas — husband and wife and the co-writers of WEST COAST AVENGERS, CONAN, and DOCTOR STRANGE — have created a solid Eternals story that would make Eternals creator Jack Kirby, proud.

Mark Texeira, the artist of GHOST RIDER fame, has brought this exciting story to life. When Mark was asked about "The Herod Factor," he said, "I approached THE ETERNALS with the intent to keep the characters as dynamic as Kirby had intended, and I put tremendous attention in the individual personalities of the characters. I wanted Ikarus to maintain a strong, stern leadership-like quality, without losing that certain *brooding* aspect of his personality. I felt this was one of the toughest assignments I have ever completed, and it represents hours of very hard work." Mark also gave much praise to HULK inker Bob McLeod, who made THE ETERNALS: "The Herod Factor" shine with a brilliant, crisp quality.

THE ETERNALS: "The Herod Factor" will be out this fall as a one-issue special. This book promises to bring Marvel's audience mystery, action, and new developments in the lives of our favorite immortals. The story and art are both sensational and those of you who think that the Eternals and the Deviants are going to kiss and make up, are in for a big surprise. The prophecy of the twins will change the lives of both the Eternals and the Deviants forever!

— Pat Garrahy

STAN'S SOAPBOX

Hi, Heroes,

I hate to sound paranoid, but I think there's a sinister plot afoot to drive me up the wall! Here's why I say that—

Everyone knows I've got the world's worst memory. In fact, I always try to write fast because I'm afraid I'll forget what I wanted to say before I reach the end of a sentence! Well, every time I finally manage to remember something important, that something inevitably changes and I have to start remembering all over again!

And you may fax yourself a long-distance No-Prize if you can find a longer, more convoluted example of getting to the point of an article! In fact, it occurs to me that we haven't reached the point yet! But here's where we go for the gold — !

It took me months to remember how to spell the name of Jim Salicrup, who had edited MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE since its inception. Then, it took me even longer to remember how to pronounce Salicrup. You can probably guess what's coming next. After I finally get it down pat, and after I reach the point where I can remember what he looks like so that I'll recognize him at a comic-book con, what happens? Just what you'd expect! Jim has given up the editorship of MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE in order to take on some urgent new chores in the batty bullpen — and poor ol' Stan has to start all over again trying to remember the name of a new editor!

And what better time to bid an affectionate farewell to Jaunty Jim, and to welcome Rollickin' Renée Witterstaetter to the much-coveted editorialship of MARVEL AGE, the magazine that dares to be diabolical! Of course, there's nothing particularly diabolical about Renée, though I may change my opinion if she decides to blue-pencil any of my meritorious monographs!

Renée, by the way, found a Silver Surfer parody I had written about a zillion years ago and printed it in the #13 July issue of WHAT THE—?, which she also edits. Well, to further demonstrate my memory, or lack of same, I happened to pick up WHAT THE—?! the other day and I started reading the first strip, entitled *"Silver Burper."* Wouldja believe I found myself chuckling and grinning and totally enjoying it, to the extent that I turned to the credits to see what comedic genius had scripted it! Imagine my surprise at seeing my own name listed as author! I had totally forgotten writing the story!

But even a lunk-headed anecdote like that one can have a point to it. The point being—I once again realized that I'm not the least bit burdened with a troublesome identity problem. I'm still my very own biggest fan!

And, speaking of video cassettes (okay, I know we weren't speaking of video cassettes, but a guy's gotta segue into his next subject somehow!) didja notice how long THE PUNISHER had been on the list of top video rentals? It's about time the poor guy got a break. His movie never made it to the theaters, for reasons which I'll never understand—although it may be because some chowderhead forgot to have Dolph Lungren wear the good ol' death's head design on his shirt. But at least he became a major star in the video rental biz, as befits one of the best selling comic book titles this side of Alpha Centurai! If you haven't yet seen it, and if you're not allergic to gunfire (I'll bet they used up more ammo filming THE PUNISHER than they did in the whole Desert Storm campaign!) then I suggest you get your eager little paws on a tape and see what all the shootin's about.

And for those of you who have been wondering why so many other comic book super heroes have sensational smash hits when they make it to the big screen, while melancholy Marvel has to be satisfied with the late, unlamented HOWARD THE DUCK, I say to thee: "Abandon not all hope, O True Believers! For as surely as night doth follow day, so shall mighty Marvel soon bring forth new glory and grandeur to theater marquees throughout the globe!"

Y'see, we're not in hot and heavy negotiations with a mammoth melange of Hollywood producers who want to do big budget cinematic versions of our major heroes and heroines. My biggest frustration is the fact that I can't tell you all the dazzling details until the contracts are finally signed, and it seems to take the army of lawyers who are working on them forever to dot all the "i's" and cross all the "t's"! But sooner or later the deals will reach fruition and then, just as we brought you the new Marvel Age of Comics lo those many years ago, we'll soon be bringing you the new Marvel Age of Movie Magnificence, or my name isn't—isn't—? Drat! There goes that memory of mine again!

Now, before we wrap things up, I just have to tell you that the whole batty Bullpen is sizzlin' with excitement about the latest and greatest Marvel club, none other than the wondrous, wily, way-out collection of fearless, frantic comic book fanatics known as WAM! (Wild Agents of Marvel!) As soon as the wraps are off and I'm freed from my awesome oath of eternal secrecy, I'll clue you in to some of the absolutely astonishing gimmicks and surprises that WAM! is offering—all kinds of skazzy stuff no other club would ever dream of doing, or, if they dreamed of it, they'd never dare to do it! But hey, it wouldn't be Marvel if it wasn't outrageous!

Well, it's time for me to take a toad to tea, but no true WAMMER would ever leave without first reminding you: "De gustibus non est disputandum!" Otherwise, you might forget all about it!

Excelsior!

Stan Lee

WILLIE LUMPKIN

STAN AND DAN'S CLASSIC COMIC STRIP FROM THE FABULOUS FIFTIES

© 1991 by Stan Lee and Dan DeCarlo

THE Sam Kieth INTERVIEW

Wolverine has become synonymous with the anthology series MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS over the years, as the berserker-enraged mutant has appeared in more multi-part dramas than you can shake an adamantium claw at. Logan's most recent adventure, an origin-saga entitled WEAPON X, ran over thirteen issues and has set several precedents for the fuzzy little guy.

Well, now it's Peter David and Sam Kieth's turn for a crack at Wolvie, as they pit the mutant against an adamantium-skinned fellow named Cyber, on the island paradise of Madripoor. This 8-part story is sure to please followers of Peter David's INCREDIBLE HULK and X-FACTOR works, but what about the lesser known Sam Keith?

To date, Sam's only previous work at Marvel was a back cover pinup for the short lived NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET book, and a fill-in issue of INCREDIBLE HULK (#368, *FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE COUNTING*). In the Hulk story, the then-gray goliath was pitted against the abominable Mr. Hyde. Sam's renderings made waves with many readers, as they were a far cry from the traditional "super hero-style" one usually associates with comic books. Sam's work

was more like fully-rendered illustrations.

Now, on the eve of Sam's premiere of "Blood Hungry," and a promotional tour which will take him to comics shops across the United States and Canada, MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE spoke to Sam about his past work, future plans, and his philosophy about comic book illustration. I called Sam long distance (New York to California), and despite a lousy connection which sounded like somebody letting the air out of a balloon, we persevered, and as a result have one of the most charismatic interviews ever published in the pages of MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE.

MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE: Hi, Sam. Thanks for taking the time to speak with us.

SAM: Oh sure, sure.

MAM: We're gonna start off with a really boring question, "What was your first published work for Marvel?"

SAM: Well, I did a NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET pinup, and the HULK fill-in. I'm hoarding copies of that one, speculating on whether they'll go up in value. I hear that there are rumors that people are having trouble finding copies of it. That's really because I have all the copies.

MAM: How did you get THE HULK job?

SAM: Well, after the NIGHTMARE thing, the assistant editor took it to the HULK assistant editor. I like dealing with the assistants, because they're all so energetic.

MAM: Well, the editors must've liked you, too. So they gave you the HULK job—?

SAM: Yeah, I was expecting the stuff to get flung right out the window. This was right before Dale (Keown) took over the book. Dale's art, I think, is actually better for HULK than mine. It's more "super hero" looking.

MAM: His stuff's great. He's very popular right now.

SAM: Yeah, he is. It's bizarre how things are speeding up for me, right now. If you do a "popular" character, you're hot. Then you get the illusion that it's you that they like. Pretty much you're standing on the shoulders of the characters you do.

MAM: Did you have a tough time getting into the mainstream comics business because your stuff is so different from the norm?

SAM: Not really. I read the *Mark's Remarks* column in MARVEL AGE a few issues back (#102), about the odds of getting in the business, and I'd be depressed if I was trying to break in right now. It's a really tough thing to do, but you've just got to keep trying. Basically, there are three levels of people in the industry.

Level One: Are the guys trying to break in at ground level, with hopes of doing the big Marvel titles. When they don't have a lot of luck, people tell them to try and work at smaller companies, just to get published, and the smart ones do. You get work published at smaller houses and work your way up from there.

Level One and a Half: Is that occasional freak-guy who gets into the big time right off the bat! But there really aren't too many of them, so don't delude yourself.

Level Three: Are the guys who work on the "popular" books. They get the better projects, X-MEN or SPIDER-MAN, say, and get the better royalties because they're higher up on the ladder. These guys have the options to pretty much pick and choose the work they do. But still, readers are buying Spider-Man, not say, "Joe Artist." Like I said, standing on the characters' shoulders.

Finally, you've got Level four: Which are the superstars of the industry. Let's use Frank Miller as an example. He can come on to a book, and sales go up. Not because of whatever character he's doing *per se*, but because the people want to read Frank Miller. People are seeing the creator first at this level, not the character.

MAM: That's four and a half levels . . .

SAM: Well . . . I'm at a point, at this particular time, where I can pick and choose what I do to an extent. It's nice to be able to do pretty much what I want.

MAM: Where did you study art?

SAM: Well . . . I didn't and I suffer for it! I'm self-taught, mostly, and years later I had to re-learn what I'd ignored in school. I try to be aware of my limitations. Perspective beyond the 1-2-3 point. Spiral staircases from Hell, and so forth. I know my work is cartoony.

I try to pepper realism. I try and do it consciously because I know what I like. When people say to me, "your stuff's cartoony," I say, "I know!" It's on purpose.

MAM: But it's based in reality, that's the important distinction. Some guys can go crazy and wildly distort reality, take Simonson for example, but the guy can actually draw. Other guys will go all nutty, but you don't get the impression that they're doing it for the right reasons.

SAM: Yeah. But everyone has a few core fans.

MAM: Yeah, my brother Bob was really excited when I mentioned I'd be doing this interview. He's a big fan of your "Critters" work.

SAM: Really? That takes me too far back! Every once in a while I'll be at a con, and someone will bring up a huge stack of that stuff, asking me for that one issue they'd missed. there's so much more of a following with the Wolverine stuff, though.

MAM: Was comics illustrations always a goal of yours?

SAM: Yeah, because there were already too many skinny white guys in rock and roll, so I decided to go this route instead. When I'd play guitar, people would be nice and everything, but they showed much more enthusiasm when I'd draw. Drawing for me was never any big deal and it came so much easier to me than music. Which, actually, is what a lot of people said to me, that "music may be hard, but listening to my music was harder!"

MAM: Here's an obligatory interview-type question: "How did the 'Blood Hungry' project come about?"

SAM: Well, after the HULK job, the assistants passed my work around this time to Terry Kavanagh. We got to talking, by phone of course, and he mentioned that he had a Wolverine story that Todd McFarlane was going to do, but it didn't work out for whatever reason and he wanted to use me. There's some pretty big shoes to fill, man.

Now, if that wasn't enough to floor me, he said that my story would be following Barry Windsor-Smith's *"Weapon X"* storyline. So, I picked myself up off the floor, and hosed myself off. I grew up reading Barry Smith! I was one nervous weenie-boy when I learned that I'd be following Barry Smith!

MAM: Sam, come on! Don't be so self-effacing! You've already referred to yourself as a "Skinny white guy" and a "weenie-boy!"

SAM: It's nice, ain't it? I'm not into the deeper implications of Magneto slugging the Radioactive Man. I know I'm full of it, and it's really no big deal.

MAM: Now, tell us a little about 'Blood Hungry.'

SAM: Well, it's incredibly bizarre. The story starts out gritty, then works into some dream sequences which feature a 1950s Logan in high school, and the villain is his coach! There's some malt shop-type stuff, and some hot rod cars made from Oscar Meyer-type weenie mobiles, which are some real phallic symbols.

MAM: We don't have those in New York.

SAM: The weenie-mobiles are all over in California. Big, long, fiberglass jobs. They're like a 14 foot long weenie in a bun with the Oscar Meyer logo on the side, except that it's a car that they drive around and sell weenies from.

Anyway, you've got to keep an open mind to the strangeness in this story. It's gonna be great for those people who always complain that they've seen the same Wolverine in the same stories too many times. This one didn't start out this odd, and Peter says he blames me for all the weird stuff, especially the weenie cars.

MAM: I take it that your creative relationship with Peter was more of a co-plotter, than strictly an artist.

SAM: Yeah, unlike the HULK thing, where I was pretty much a hired hand. When I started this story, Peter only had a few chapters written and he asked me to come up with stuff. Well, I came up with stuff! Then, I had to take a short break to work on an *Aliens* book, and by the time I'd come back, he'd forgotten about them!

But he really took my ideas and ran with them. There was a cat that I drew in the villain's house. Just a cat in a chair, stuck in the corner. No big deal, you know? Peter picked up on, played with it, and came up with these parallels to Tyger Tiger, and her relationship to Logan. I'd also suggested we do the climax of the story with these guys dangling from trees, like monkeys or something, and he went with it. Peter's a hell of a writer, probably the best one Marvel's got.

MAM: Your work is stunningly different

SAM: You are so excited. You're pumping me up, here. Do you do this with everybody?

MAM: No, Sam, hey — if you weren't so good I wouldn't be talkin' to you. The fact is, your work is *stunningly different* from any other artist in the Marvel stable. Was that by accident or design?

SAM: Man — what a question. Why don't you ask me why my foot is shaped like it is. Did I grow it that way, or did I flatten it out with a hammer? Actually, it's probably a little bit of both.

My work is a synthesis of the styles I admired when I was developing as an artist. When my work looks *underground*, it's because I see it in my mind as a Bernie Wrightson-type drawing. When my work seems more, *pop*, it's because I see it as a Terry Austin-type drawing.

If I'm doing, say, a rocky cliff, I'd be going the Frank Frazetta route.

When I was younger, it took me years to draw like John Byrne, and then when I was older it took me even longer to stop. Some people can pull that sorta "draw like someone else" stuff off. Take Bernie Wrightson — his drawings are like bear traps. Only a few people have the skill to do that kind of work. You can put a thousand skinny lines in, but nobody comes close to his sense of light and shadow. Kelley Jones is the only one who comes to mind, who even comes close. I am trying to get away from my classical influences.

MAM: What was your first job in comics?

SAM: It was a ten-page story called *Max the Hare* about a bunny rabbit, and I was one happy bugger to get it. It was published by some small company that only had four black and white books at the time. I didn't even get complimentary copies of the thing! I had to go out and buy them myself.

MAM: Nice perk of working for a major publisher . . . free comics! So tell me, are there any creators that you're dying to work with?

SAM: Dying? You mean, like guys it's even *possible* for me to work with?

MAM: Well, hypothetically. I guess it could be a dead guy, even.

SAM: No, no . . . There are guys who I respect or like. But nobody I'd die for. I mean, it's a fat chance in hell that these superstar guys are gonna call me up on the phone saying, "Sammy, you gotta be on my next gig!" Although, as far as top-line creators I'd like to collaborate with the line would go around the block. Moebius once said he liked my work, and that was a great compliment. He's one of the greatest illustrators in the world! I'd kill to work with Mike Kaluta, any of those classic guys.

There is a click of these superstars, but I don't know any of them. I know that if I sat down with some great illustrator, and everything was off the table he'd probably say, "Sam, your work has too many lines! It's this! It's that! It's blah, blah, blah, blah!" And they'd be right.

MAM: What plans do you have for other Marvel characters?

SAM: You know — I'm one of the luckiest guys in the world. Things were so-so with my career before, but at Marvel I stroll on in, do a pinup, a HULK issue, and now I'm slated for another 8-part MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS Ghost Rider story. That'll start right after the Wolverine-thing. Other than that, maybe I'd like to do Doctor Strange. I can't believe my luck, to walk on in to Marvel and draw the characters I grew up reading!

MAM: Do you aspire to be a regular artist for a monthly series, as seems to be the case for a lot of artists, or do you want to specialize in unique projects?

SAM: The Eternal Question. The special things are long enough, believe me. Wolverine will run eight parts over four months, then Ghost Rider will be another eight parts. So the MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS readers will be getting eight months in a row of me, every two weeks! It seems I'll be in that book until they kick me off or kill me. I do my best work at the eight-page level, though. At least for now.

A regular book would kill me now. I might try it, but I'd have mixed feelings if I did it and it turned out bad. For now, this is fine, this is perfect. this way, the quality can't slip. If it does, everybody who looks at it knows. You get immediate rejection, even from the laypersons. I have had offers to do series at Marvel and elsewhere, but I'd prefer to do my work right.

MAM: Here's a two-part question for you. Has anything either very wonderful or very terrible ever happened to you while on an art job?

SAM: Well, there have been some real bad jobs, sure. There were jobs that turned out to be much more difficult than I originally thought. My work on DC's *Sandman*, for instance. Over all, I'm not ashamed of it, but it was a little frustrating. I'm very proud of my work on *Epicurus The Sage*, and of course, the Hulk and Wolverine jobs.

It's funny, but there's a strong halo effect when you work at a big company. When I find a person who likes to work with me, it's like the whole company likes me. It depends on the people you're working with. It seems that if, say, Editor "A" is nice, then life is good. But if Editor "B" is a grouch, then it gets sticky.

It seems sometimes like there is no Marvel or DC — just 50 editors!

MAM: Another obligatory, interview-type question: Where do you hope to be a year from now?

SAM: Well, I'm not going to be doing Wolverine forever. I can do a book, say, then quit, and people will think I quit, or got fired. But it's not in my game plan to

draw only the popular characters. It's only a part of the main body of the work I'd like to do.

I'd like to do a black and white comic book, that wouldn't do big guns in sales, but would be more personal as a work. I'd like to take everything I've ever done and integrate it into one story. Except the Marvel stuff, of course, because I don't own it and I'd get sued. But maybe I could allude to it. I'd collect it into one universe. It would be an appalling read, but that's the goal.

MAM: It seems that more and more limited series or series-within-a-series, are being produced later as trade paperbacks. Any plans for "Blood Hungry?"

SAM: It's gearing up already. Terry's pretty serious about it, and said he'd be surprised if one didn't come out. However, there is a poster in the works from either some promotional art, or the cover from the first issue. I'm not sure . . . but the book's not even out yet!

The other day I saw an ad for a T-shirt from the first cover, and the book's not even out yet! It's mind boggling! Last week I got a call from some guy wanting to buy some of the Wolverine art, maybe a cover, I dunno. He offered me 800 bucks for the stuff, on the spot! I said, again, *"But the book's not even out yet!"* I couldn't believe it!

But again, it's not my popularity as much as the character's. This guy wanted an original Wolverine. Nobody calls me up, offering 800 bucks a page for my *"Critters"* stuff. More people have offered to buy this Wolverine art than anything else I've done.

MAM: Well, Wolverine is a popular guy! What do you think is so appealing about him?

SAM: For me? Well, I like what John Byrne said, that Wolverine is a Canadian Clint Eastwood. He's an escapist character and he allows you to safely vent frustrations. He's a perfect capsule for that. If you're having problems with your folks, or your editor, he helps you get that out of your system. He's — *gritty!*

MAM: What super hero would you be, given a choice?

SAM: I'd say from ages 6 - 11 I wanted to be the Hulk. I was one of those kids who was hounded by civilization. From 11 - 28, it was definitely Spider-Man. I think most people, given a choice, would be Spider-Man. It's hard not to be. And I mean the original Spider-Man, too. Not the got-it-together, got-a-gorgeous-wife-at-home Spider-Man either. I'm talking the Spider-Man who goes out and saves the city, but everyone hates him. He comes home after fighting a bad guy to find he left the milk out and it's spoiled.

MAM: Tell us about the promotional tour you're on.

SAM: Well, it's eleven dates, all over the place. You wake up in a hotel, fly in a plane for a few hours, drive to a store, plug yourself for hours, go to a hotel, then repeat.

The people are really great, though. It makes it all worth while. I couldn't organize a tour if my life depended on it. I don't mean to come off like I've got the self-respect of a slug, or anything. It's just how I am.

I know I'm not the greatest artist in the world. If I thought I was, I'd be acting like a weenie. Any one of these classic guys, John Buscema, Kaluta, Frazetta, could blow me away. If I acted like that, I'd be looking stupid in front of people I respect.

You can act all high and mighty, but it doesn't get you anywhere. You're not fooling anybody. There are plenty of guys, not only in the comics industry, that go around acting like some big weenie because they've got some degree of success. I don't want to become a weenie. And if I ever do become a weenie, Mike, I hope you'll send me a T-shirt that says, *"I am a weenie!"* Because I will wear it!

—Mike Lackey

AS TODD RUNDGREN SAYS
IT'S THAT 'OLD...
"THE EVIL POWERS
TORTURED ARTIST
GEE, I FEEL SO ARTISTICALLY DRIVEN RIGHT NOW!
I WONDER IF I'LL EVER GET OUT OF HERE!
BE CAREFUL, FEDERAL EXPRESS HERE!
I KNOW IT'S NOT MUCH, BUT IT'S HEAVY!

We taunted and tantalized you enough, faithful ones. Submitted for your approval are five of the eleven dates of the SAM KIETH TOUR '91. If possible, try and get down to any one of these stores, and show your support for this guy, okay?

August 16th and 17th
MILE HIGH COMICS
2151 56th Avenue
Denver, CO 80221
(303) 455-2659

August 18th
SUPERIOR COMICS
1630 Superior Avenue
Costa Mesa, CA 92627
(714) 631-3933

August 23rd
NEW DEMENTION COMICS
2609 Central Avenue
Charlotte, NC 28205
(704) 377-4376

August 24
ATOMIC COMIC
1318 W. Southern, Suite 9
Mesa, AZ 85202
(602) 649-0807

August 31st
NIGHT FLIGHT COMICS
Cottonwood Mall
4835 S. Highland Drive
Salt Lake City, UT 84117
(801) 272-8343

A MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE exclusive! A Self-portrait of Sam Kieth!!!

MARK's REMARKS

and

New Talent Department

A couple installments back I did a long diatribe on the odds that those who choose to submit their work to us have in breaking into the industry through the "blind submissions" route. As I anticipated, the mail I've received has included several of the "how dare you stomp on our fantasies of becoming a pro" and the "well, if that's Marvel's policy, then I'll bet you're letting the next Frank Miller or Todd MacFarlane slip right by unnoticed" variety. To answer the first type of letter, I'd like to reiterate what I warned pretty adamantly in my previous column — don't read on if you're the easily discouraged type. To respond to the second type of letter, let me say that I truly believe that those "destined" to toil in the fields of professional comics *will find a way to do so no matter what obstacles the uncaring, unfeeling, insensitive, powers-that-be may throw in their paths.* That is to say, I don't believe we're letting a single Miller- or McFarlane-level talent get away. Part of what makes a person Miller- or McFarlane-level is perseverance and drive, the need to create, to storytell, to do comics — against all odds. And if I'm wrong, if indeed an M&M-level talent slips through unencouraged and unhired, we're never going to miss him or her because there's only ten other guys or gals who do have the perseverance and drive to take that one's place. I really feel strongly about this, folks. While I'm discussing the mail, let me thank those of you who took the time to write me notes of appreciation for telling you the truth of the submissions situation.

Ahem. Now then . . . the second half of the aforementioned column discussed a specific plot submission. And after giving it a once-over-lightly critique, I invited the plotters to give plotting another try, and I would do in this space just the thing that *none* of Marvel's staff of fifteen-odd editors has the time for in real life: to develop and work with an untried newcomer in an attempt to make his or her story publishable by Marvel's standards. Submitted for my approval is a 5-page Captain America story by Jean-Jacques Dzialowski and Louis DeRoys of Paris, France. I invited the guys to do a Cap story since it's a well-known Marvel hero with which I have a good deal of familiarity.

Without further ado, the plot submission . . .

Plot for 5 pages featuring CAPTAIN AMERICA
"Dreams and realities"

1: Splash: In the subway, CAPTAIN AMERICA is standing motionless, brooding, oblivious to the flabbergasted and surprised New Yorkers around him. He is looking toward the windows on his right, therefore on the left hand side of the page. He seems rather sad, depressed. Various people, adults and kids, are standing and sitting beside him, each one of them adopting a different attitude toward the super soldier. For example, on the far left of the picture (at the bottom of the page) and right in front of him is a kid who is hesitating to ask for an autograph also, on the far right (still at bottom) is another kid, partly off panel, running toward the hero. There are as well a tourist (behind Cap) who is looking at him with interest and admiration, an older man who seems a little bit absent-minded, a young man looking with envy and amazement, a black man, contemptuous and distrustful and finally, a beautiful young girl, smiling winsomely.

2: Horizontal panel across the top of the page of Cap, looking at the reflection of his face in the subway windows, still brooding. The tunnel's lights can be seen outside. this picture gives way to another one, still within this first panel, on the right side, as Cap's dark thoughts take him back to the moment that triggered all his present questioning about the meaning of the American Dream today: A tired Cap is chasing a street thug somewhere in the streets of Manhattan; the pursuit, which takes place in the evening, is sort of short duration as the thug — on whom we have a close in as he looks timidly behind, scared and sweating — soon joins an entire street gang which was apparently prepared to welcome the hero with "all the due honors." A close up on Cap's moderately surprised face — he was expecting some kind of trap all along — enables us to see a sneaky gang member behind him, bearing down on him with a club. Now we hurry up the action as the man stands ready to make his move (close up on upper body part), he is frowning and his eyes are filled with rage and scorn. Another front view shows Cap losing his balance as he receives the blow on his neck (though we don't see it yet, his shield has just fallen down and rolls on the pavement).

3: Another horizontal panel across the top of the page of Cap lying down seemingly unconscious. In truth, he is shamming because he wants to know the reason why a mere street gang planned his capture. Some gang members start gathering around him, but we can only see their feet and boots. Cap listens to them celebrate their easy victory over what they think was an unsuspecting prey, stupidly heedless of the trick. We (and Cap) then realize that we are dealing with true amateurs, at least as far as super hero capture is concerned. We are introduced to the gang leader, a young man who is not too happy about the course of things. Afterward, we turn our attention toward the still rolling shield, on which we go closer and closer till we reach a full shot of its star, after which it falls down with a bang. Half an hour! I've been playing with them for almost half an hour and now I've had enough! Cap thinks, slowly opening his eyes, distinguishing before him three persons (among whom is the gang leader) surrounded by many blinding spotlights.

4: They've chained me to a chair! Cap thinks. They've chained me and gagged me! What kind of amateurs are they? I could break free anytime I choose to! What's their game any-

way? The gang leader (back to us) approaches him while the two others remain behind, and it gives us the opportunity to have a first look at the place in which we are, that is, a warehouse. A lamp sheds light upon Cap, who is in front of the leader. We then focus on the leader's face, watching Cap with cold and awfully calm eyes. Two radiant spotlights behind him blind the star-spangled hero. This time, that does it! He thinks. I'm going to — How you feel? the leader says suddenly. Powerless perhaps? Only in your mind! Cap thinks. We have a full front shot of Cap, chained and gagged, a spotlight pointed at him; he does indeed look powerless and ticked off. He wants some answers and he wants them now! The leader unleashes violently at Cap, grasping his costume (side view). Just who do you think you are, man? Making big bloody speeches 'bout doos and don'ts, 'bout what's right o' wrong, 'bout your precious biasted values, your so-called American Dream you pretend to stand for?!!, the leader says. Cap is visibly taken aback. From then, we will proceed to a slow zooming in on Cap's face and then on his left eye (right for us). Each focus will be alternating with the leader's interventions. Do you know, he says, do you know kids kill for a candy bar here?! Do you know there are still countless homeless who die each day in your great dreamy country? Do you know all that?!! Now, Cap starts realizing what is going on. He is livid.

5: The leader gets more and more infuriated. He clenches a fist in front of him and points a finger at Cap. He tells us that Cap recently went to an orphanage to warn kids about the danger of drug addiction and to ask them to be true to the American Dream. Only, does it still exist?!, the leader shouts out. Are you blind or what? You just have to open your eyes in the streets to see your biasted values are forever lost in your biasted past! Unless, maybe you're still livin' in the 40s? They say you save butts time and again, that you're sooo powerful . . . so what are ya waitin' for to save us?! Or p'rhaps the big hero is helpless . . . helpless to change his precious flawed country . . . Sometimes, things are better forgotten, uh? So don't tell me to respect your bloody inexistent ideals! Cap is as paralyzed, his mind has gone blank, there is no spark in his eyes. There's no place for the likes of you here today, anyway! Your time is up! The leader now tries and gets ahold of himself, he speaks calmly, searching for a way out of his world of violence and anarchy. He says he never wanted this but for him and his gang — as for many others — there was no choice. Your government loves challenges so much, he says, so instead o' spending money on wars, what 'bout spending money on us?! You know, some of us would like to go to college . . .

They say you stand for justice, for the rights of men . . . p'rhaps we ain't worth the effort . . . Cap('s eye) is completely beleaguered. Remember, he continues, we've nothing but a choice, to live, with all that entails, or die. The leader eventually takes his leave and an hour will go by before Cap decides to burst his shackles and go away, still reeling from the shock. We then return to present time mode as Cap, still in the subway, swears to give back the grandeur to his Dream, to make it come true. Literally. For as long as he will live, he will remain true to it. Looking forward to achieving his goal, a moment long overdue, Cap starts planning measures . . .

Okay, I'm back. Now . . . where to begin? Well, first let me say that five pages is not a lot of space to tell a story in, and the limited space factor has to be taken into account in plotting such a tale. It is by no means an impossible length to tell a story in — I do five-page stories in the back of a certain Marvel super hero's magazine (no plugs allowed) on a regular basis, and even though many of my five-pagers are continued, I introduce the characters, set up some conflicts, and resolve at least one of these conflicts every episode. So it can be done. What a five-pager forces one to do is to be extremely economical and throw out every single element that does not demand to be there.

That being said, having a framing device so that the thrust of the story takes place in flashback is an incredible waste of space. I believe that one has to have an extraordinarily compelling reason to invert chronological order in a story, and in the plot at hand, to give Cap a page and a half of space to passively brood is not what I deem a compelling reason. In a five-pager you have to get into the meat of the story fast — in fact, trimming away all excess story fat, you virtually have to start already in that meat of the story. Or as Cap himself might say, "You've got to hit the ground running." In this case, it would be Cap already in the midst of the street fight where we are (almost) introduced to the central conflict of the story.

A note on introducing characters in comics. Characters, even those in a 96-page story, should be introduced in such a way as to maximize the amount of information you can get in about them. And since the comic book is a visual medium, that introduction to each character demands to be visual. Figure out the essential things a reader has to know about Cap in order to understand a story about him, then find something — an event, a situation, an activity — that enables you to show and tell the most number of things. Let's boil down Cap to the irreducables and see what traits we have: 1) He's a man of action. 2) He represents the ideals of America. 3) He wears a costume proclaiming his connection with America. 4) He's a man of honor. 5) He has no astounding superhuman powers, he's simply one of the world's most capable combatants. 6) He carries a shield that can be used both for defense or offense. 7) He's a brilliant strategist with an indomitable will to succeed. All right then, so how many can we work into our very first glimpse of Cap, and how many will we have to save for later? Well, in the splash page in question, the only thing we have introduced of these seven is that he wears a costume proclaiming his connection to America. I think we could have utilized one fifth of the entire story to give more than one-seventh of Cap's essential characteristics. Cap, in characteristic action, would go a long way.

Many novice writers believe that action and characterization are at odds — you can either do one or the other. Frequently we'll see a plot that says in effect, "time out from the action to do a character scene." I believe that's wrong, that characters show their characteristics through action. Put Cap, Spider-Man, and the Punisher in an identical situation — say, in the midst of a street fight scene like the one here — and if we are true to their characters, we will see them react in three completely dif-

ferent manners. *Whenever possible, characters should act their characterization, not think it!*

Okay, so after trimming the clutter and cutting straight to the chase, we get Cap in the middle of a street gang somewhere in Manhattan. At this point, as much as the order-monger in me would like to deconstruct the story page by page, sequence by sequence, I'm going to have to address matters pertaining to the whole of the story here, since it affects virtually every other panel after the splash page. My first question to the story's authors is: What is this story about? If I may be so presumptuous as to answer my own question for Messers. Dzialowski and DeRoys, I'd venture that the story is about Cap learning about the plight of the homeless in Manhattan. This to me is a worthy theme for a Captain America story. Cap's character naturally lends itself to the examination of certain issues prevalent in modern America, and I myself have frequently used such issues as springboards for my stories.

Okay, so the story is about Cap and the homeless. Permit me to ask (and answer) a few more questions pertaining to the content of the story as it applies to story structure. In these questions and answers, story and character requirements will be made evident . . . How is Cap introduced to the central theme of the story (homelessness)? He meets a gang of homeless people . . . What is it the homeless people want? They want, or at least their leader wants, Cap to acknowledge the homeless people's situation and for him to get the government to spend money on the homeless . . . How do they go about trying to get what they want? They capture Cap and give him an impassioned speech on the righteousness of their position . . . What does Cap want in the story? At first he wants to capture a thug (who did something Cap apparently doesn't approve of although it's not specified). Then he wants to know why this thug is part of a street gang . . . How does Cap try to go about getting what he wants? First by chasing the thug and then by surrendering to the street gang, feigning unconsciousness, and listening to an impassioned speech . . . How is the situation resolved? Cap breaks free after hearing the speech, profoundly affected by it, and apparently decides a) to let the thug he was chasing go, b) to not inform the street leader that violence and intimidation is an inappropriate, ineffective, or illegal manner to get one's point across, and c) to go to Washington to ask for the monetary appropriations the street leader demanded. I'm assuming these things since the framing device interrupts just at the point where some of this would be made clear . . . What is preventing Cap from giving the street leader what he wants? Apparently nothing. Cap has the blinders lifted from his eyes and agrees to it unflinchingly.

All right. Looking at this overview of the character motivations and actions, we should be able to see where the story's problems lie. Some of them have to do with character, some of them have to do with the story events. Let's start with story events. Reducing this story to its basic actions, we have Cap meets leader, Cap captured by leader, Cap listens to leader, Cap breaks free and decides to do what leader wants. Even if this weren't about a character who's defined as a "man of action," there isn't a lot of action here. Furthermore, there's no real conflict between the two characters. What is the turning point of the story, the point at which the story is decided in either the protagonist's or antagonist's favor? It's when Cap, tied up and sitting down, mentally decides the antagonist (the leader) is right. I purposely used the expression "mentally decides," despite the fact that it is redundant (all decisions are mental by their nature), to emphasize that the turning point is an inner action — something that cannot be seen. In a visual medium such as comics, this is one of the closest things we have to a cardinal sin. If indeed a turning point is reached mentally, this mental resolution must be expressed physically — visually — in some way, in order to meet the requirements of the medium. Boiling down the actions of the story as we did above, my central criticism of the story is . . . nothing happens in five pages except one guy talks to another guy!

As for character motivations, I'm afraid that this story apparently shows an extremely limited understanding of Cap's character and essential nature (see the seven character traits above). While it is just barely feasible that Cap would feign weakness and unconsciousness in order to get information, I can think of at least three other ways he could achieve the same thing without looking like a pushover and by doing something more visual than losing a fight and sitting around tied up. Furthermore, while no one living in New York City could be unaware of the omnipresent legions of homeless persons, it is possible for the sake of argument that Cap has not had time to give the issue an incredible amount of thought. Yet all the leader does is narrate the plight of the homeless (and orphans), he does not show it in any dramatic way whatsoever. And this is supposed to be so compelling that Cap reorders his career priorities? What I read wasn't, and I'm not the impassioned idealist Cap is.

The leader says Cap told some orphans to "be true" to the American Dream. I assume that means "believe in" the American Dream. As I see it, the American Dream is that there's a place (America) where you have the freedom to better yourself, to make your life what you wish it to be, regardless of your race, creed, sex, sexual orientation or socioeconomic status. This is not the American Guarantee, that all people will be able to better themselves — only the American Dream, that all people will have an equal opportunity to better themselves. Cap believes in that dream, he fights to make that dream possible for others by battling the enemies of freedom, and he may indeed try to foster this dream in others. To "be true" to this dream, you would indeed try to better your lot in life, whatever that lot is. Does Cap know that America is not perfect, that not everyone has the opportunity to pursue the American Dream in his/her particular fashion? I think so. But to paraphrase the words of a former American president, "Others look at the way things are and ask why. I look at the way things should be and ask why not." Cap goes farther, and does what one man with no special powers can to make things in America as they "should be." Sending Cap to Washington to ask for appropriations for the homeless not only misdirects Cap's mission in America but I feel is not the sort of action in character with him. As a child of the streets orphaned at an early age himself, Cap can relate to the plight of the poor already and very probably does not feel that government welfare will ultimately help very many of these homeless individuals learn to be self-sufficient. Finally, having Cap walk away in essence condoning the violent means the street leader used to make his point is woefully out of character. No matter what the leader's message was, the ends do not justify the means, Cap would think. And finally, the worst single element of the story: Cap loses because he's wrong. I'd have a problem with a story where Cap loses to begin with; one where he loses because he's wrong about something so basic as his total belief system is way off the mark. *The essence of heroic fiction is to let heroes do something heroic.*

Bottom line. We have an unpublishable story here. While Cap encountering the homeless could make an interesting story (I've been working on an angle for one for several months now), that story would have to let Cap act in character, let Cap do something heroic, and played out through action, not talk. I realize now that Cap is an exceedingly difficult character to write due to his complicated ideals, and he may be even more so for non-Americans to get a handle on. Okay, Messers. Dzialowski and DeRoys, let's pick another character — Spider-Man maybe — and take another try at a five-page plot. Please bear in mind the points I made relating to the structure of short stories in general, okay? To be continued.

—Mark Gruenwald

Fred Hembeck PRESENTS BROTHER VOODOO in "TOMB IT MAY CONCERN"

WOW! TOMB OF DRACULA IS COMING BACK!! ISN'T THAT GREAT??

GEE, WITH *WEREWOLF BY NIGHT* AND *MAN-THING* SERIALS SUCCESSFULLY RUNNING IN *MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS* RECENTLY--NOT TO MENTION THE *TREMENDOUS* RESPONSE THE NEW *GHOST RIDER* HAS RECIEVED--JUST MAYBE IT'S TIME THAT THE *MONSTERS* AND THE *HORROR HEROES* FROM BACK IN THE *SEVENTIES* ARE FINALLY GOING TO GET SOME *RESPECT*...

..MYSELF INCLUDED... heh...

...WOULDN'T *THAT* BE NICE?... ...ZZZZ

TUT, TUT, DON'T *FRET*, BRO --THEY'RE *SURE* TO CALL-- SIMON GARTH, the ZOMBIE?..

PRESENT. 4 ISSUE PRESTIGE SERIES, 4 DIFFERENT TRADING CARDS AND HYPNO DISC INCLUDED IN THE FIRST ISSUE.

OKAY, IT'S ONLY LOGICAL THAT THE *ORIGINAL* MARVEL ZOMBIE SHOULD GET A SHOT, BUT WHO *ELSE* COULD THEY FIND TO PRECEDE ME? THE GOLEM?..

AT YOUR SERVICE. 6 ISSUE SERIES, CARDBOARD COVER EMBOSSED WITH SILVER INK ON THE FIRST ISSUE, CARDBOARD COVER EMBOSSED WITH GOLD INK ON THE LAST ISSUE.

OY! SATA the DEV DAUGHTE

YUP. 5 DIFF. PRINT COVERS: 4 TRADING CARDS, 3 POSTERS, 2 SILVER INK FOLDOUTS, AND A PARTRIDGE IN A PLASTIC BAG... THE BOG BEAST?!? *THE BOG BEAST?!* HE WASN'T EVEN PUBLISHED BY MARVEL?!?..

...AND, *POSSIBLY* TO FOLLOW, A *COMIC BOOK*.

AARRGH!

OBOY, WHAT A NIGHTMARE!!

MAY JUST ING BACK FO EL

Fred Hembeck character and the distinctive likeness thereof is a trademark of Fred Hembeck.

ZZZZZ
OBOY!
MARVEL LIMBO
I CAN JUST FEEL IT! THE TIME FOR BROTHER VOODOO HAS FINALLY CO--
PLEASE WAIT TO BE CALLED
FRANKEN-STEIN MONSTER?..
YO.
12 ISSUE LIMITED SERIES, STANDARD FORMAT.
OKAY, I'LL ADMIT, FRANK DOES HAVE THE NAME RECOGNITION FACTOR GOING FOR HIM. BUT I'M SURE IT'S JUST A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE I'M--
THE LIVING MUMMY?..
HERE.
DELUXE HARDCOVER, SEALED IN PLASTIC, GAUZE SAMPLE INCLUDED.
WHO'S NEXT?
YESSS?
9" BY 12" 3-D ONESHOT WITH A GLOW IN THE DARK FOLD OUT CENTERSPREAD.
BAH! THE WOMAN HAS FAMILY CONNECTIONS!
WELL, I'M CERTAIN TO BE NEXT-- AFTER ALL, WHO ELSE IS THERE?..
THE MANPHIBIAN?..
GLUG GLUG.
THE MANPHIBIAN?! BUT--BUT--HE HAD ONLY ONE STORY & PUBLISHED?!?..
32 PAGE ONE SHOT WITH 32 COVER VARIATIONS, ONE EACH SPOTLIGHTING THE ACTION OF A DIFFERENT PAGE.
..THAT'S...THAT'S GOTTA BE IT. ME, I'M NEXT, RIGHT...WHO ELSE COULD THERE BE?.. THERE'S NO ONE LEFT...GOTTA BE ME.., WHO ELSE?..
THE BOG BEAST?..
BE I SHOULD STOP DREAMIN' ABOUT A COMEBACK AND LET THE FOLKS AT MARVEL DO WHAT THEY DO BEST, LIKE--
TAP TAP
HUH?
HEY, BRO--JUST WANTED TO REMIND YOU OF THE NEW 8 PART WOLVERINE SERIAL COMING SOON TO MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS--
--OR HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN?
THAT'S RIGHT, FANS--MORE WOLVERINE, STILL NO BROTHER VOODOO!
sigh
IN THE MEANTIME, WHILE I WAIT--AND WAIT AND WAIT--I'D LIKE TO RECOMMEND THE NEW TOMB OF DRACULA LIMITED SERIES. FOLKS, IF YOU LIKE YOUR COMICS TO HAVE A LITTLE EXTRA BITE, TAKE IT FROM ME, THIS ONE'S FOR YOU!

MARVEL® LICENSING

In the past we've focused on all the things that different companies produce using Marvel's characters. This month we focus on one of those companies and perhaps Marvel's oldest licensee, *Comic Images*. Marvel's association with Comic Images began in 1984 and has grown steadily to a point where it is one of our largest Direct Sales market licensees. When MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE contacted Creative Director Hank Rose, he was busy preparing to leave for the upcoming San Diego ComicCon. But he graciously took time to talk with us about his long association with Marvel and what fans can expect to see in the near future.

How did your association with Marvel begin?

My partner, George Fahs, and I were involved in producing all the images for Fruit of the Loom's licensed underwear line, Underoos. In addition, we sort of acted as the liaison between Marvel and the other licensors and Fruit of the Loom.

As a result we were later offered by Sol Brodsky, the head of Marvel's licensing at the time, the license to produce and sell products to the Direct Market which had recently been created. We worked closely with Sol and then later with his assistant, Nel Yomtov, who of course is now a Marvel editor. As a matter of fact, Nel was the first artist we had producing our line.

What was your first product?

Our first products were some bumper stickers and three T-shirts, a Wolverine, a Thor and an Alpha Flight. This was when John Romita, Jr. was drawing X-MEN, Walter Simonson was doing THOR and John Byrne was doing ALPHA FLIGHT.

We shipped those shirts to the distributors and found out very quickly that the Direct Market — in other words the serious comic book fan — did not want heat-transfer designs that flaked and peeled after a few washings. They wanted their illustrations to both look good and last, and that meant they had to be silk-screened. We immediately switched to silk-screening.

From the beginning T-shirts have been our main item. We do about ten different designs a month, including designs for sweatshirts, tank tops, long sleeve T-shirts and regular T-shirts.

You have made a name for yourself in being able to have your new designs and illustrations "keep pace" with the publishing events. Can you explain how you do this?

The reason that we are able to get T-shirt designs out in conjunction with new title or character of book releases is by reading the comics and keeping up with the current trends! If I wasn't keeping track of what Marvel is doing, I wouldn't be doing my job.

We have a fast turnaround time from getting the new art and design to producing and shipping new T-shirts because this is what the fans want. So we stay in close contact with editor in chief Tom DeFalco and Direct Sale Manager/Distributor Liason Sven Larsen and other key people at Marvel who can help us and guide us.

What new things can we expect to see from Comic Images?

For 1992 we are going to have two tremendous new calendars for sale. One is going to be an X-Men wall calendar like our 1991 Spider-Man calendar. It will also be an X-Force 1992 wall calendar with Rob Liefeld art.

In September of this year we're going to be launching a new product, long sleeve T-shirts. The first we're really excited about — it's a black long sleeve T-shirt with a Punisher skull pocket design on the front and a row of Punisher skulls running down each of the sleeves. This design was very well received when we did preliminary showings at conventions. We're also doing an X-Men long sleeve T-shirt to commemorate the success of the new X-Men title. We'll have the cover of X-MEN #1 on it and X's running down the sleeves.

The important thing to remember about Comic Images is that we are specialized manufacturing company. We are a specialized manufacturing company. We are constantly thinking of what the fan wants in the way of product to go along with the comics that he/she reads.

—Dwight Jon Zimmerman

Advance designs of Comic Images' new line of Marvel long sleeve shirts

Consider a young man named Frank, successful in his new career, happily married at last to Marlene, a woman who loves him dearly. It would seem that at long last he can put the dreadful memories of his past behind him: the horrific demise of a past girlfriend, his own attempt at suicide, his infatuation with a woman, Rachel, considered capable only of hatred. And above all, the presence of the ultimate enemy, seemingly invincible, indestructible, inescapable, and eternal, wreaking death and destruction wherever Frank turned. But all of this passed from Frank's life years ago.. Now he is happy.. A new life, it would seem, has begun for Frank Drake.

But then Frank learns to his horror that his new life is a sham. He has not escaped his past but been swallowed up by it. His loving wife takes on the personality and even the looks of the deceased Rachel. And the enemy long thought destroyed, has risen yet again — Frank's own infamous ancestor. For Frank's true family name is not Drake but Dracula, and his ancestor is the Lord of Vampires, intent on making the modern day world his own.

This is the story of Marvel's new TOMB OF DRACULA four-issue limited series, reviving the classic series of the same name from the 1970s. Marv Wolfman, who wrote most of the original TOMB OF DRACULA series, and Gene Colan, its penciler throughout TOMB's run, are once again the creative team, this time joined as inker by legendary artist Al Williamson, under the editorial auspices of Terry Kavanagh.

Marv is well known for his work over the last two decades on SPIDER-MAN, FANTASTIC FOUR, and other Marvel series, as well as *The New Titans*, *Batman*, and *Crisis on Infinite Earths* at the Distinguished Competition, while Gene Colan was one of the great original Marvel artists of the 1960s, turning out classic work on DAREDEVIL and IRON MAN, and has more recently done THE BLACK PANTHER in MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS. Their collaboration on TOMB OF DRACULA, though, stands apart from the rest as a unique body of work and a highlight of their careers.

In the early 1970s Marvel, a successful but still small company, undertook a massive expansion of its line of comics. Due to recent revisions of the Comics Code, Marvel was now able to launch an entire line of books dealing in supernatural horror; it was at this time, for example, that the original GHOST RIDER series began. The first of the Marvel horror series was TOMB OF DRACULA, which became by far the most commercially successful of them all, spawning a magazine spin-off series, DRACULA LIVES, and lasting longer than any of the others.

TOMB was also very much an artistic success, featuring superb work by Gene Colan and inker Tom Palmer, and fascinating stories by Marv Wolfman. The series followed a small band of vampire hunters — Frank Drake, Rachel van Helsing, the elderly Quincy Harker, and Blade, a vampire killer wielding wooden daggers — in their pursuit of Dracula across the face of the globe. Along the way Wolfman and Colan presented us with powerful, penetrating character studies of the protagonists, of supporting characters and even of Dracula himself. In various ways TOMB was a forerunner of the sophisticated horror series that have emerged in comics over the last half decade.

Asked why he thought TOMB had become a cult classic, Marv Wolfman speculates, "I think it was partially because it was more adult than virtually anything else going on at the time that lasted. I think the stories took people places that had not been done that much in comics to that point. I think the art was just astoundingly good, and that all of us were in the right place at the right time to produce a book that was very different from what people expected. I also think there is always an interest in good horror material, and we were doing some very good, solid horror stories at the time."

The new TOMB has been a long time in the making; Marv plotted the first issue two and a half to three years ago. Asked how it feels to be writing TOMB once more, Marv says he finds it "Very strange. Very frightening. I understand Steve Ditko's attitude when he said he'd never go back to SPIDER-MAN because no matter what he did, no one would think it was as good as it used to be. TOMB OF DRACULA was the first horror book of its kind; it certainly had the longest run. And it was very strong during the 1970s, but it was a continuity book that was built from issue to issue. I never really worked on one shot stories (for TOMB OF DRACULA), so trying to do one, trying to make it work for today's market, and still do the type of stuff that works for Dracula, was a very frightening concept. Because I didn't know if the best I did would be thought of as being as good as the work I had done in the past."

Marv believes that the new series is actually better than the old, but notes that he himself has changed from the days when he wrote the original TOMB. "I'm not in the same place I was in 1979. I would not have done this story five years ago. This is very much a story of the last few years."

On the other hand, Marv still finds the same strengths in Gene Colan's work on the new TOMB that Gene had on the original series. "It is as it was back then, in that Gene creates a lot of verisimilitude for the storyline. You believe the locations; you believe the feeling that Gene is giving you. Gene's strength has always been his people, but that's part of the reality he creates."

Surprisingly, Marv still has seen very little of Dracula in the movies. Instead, his principal influence remains the original DRACULA novel written in the late nineteenth century by Bram Stoker. When Dracula appears in the new TOMB OF DRACULA, his scenes are often very powerful indeed, but he remains offstage for large parts of each issue. "That's very much because of the novel itself," explains Marv. "The original Stoker novel was really about everyone but Dracula. It was about how Dracula affected everyone; he was a very minor character in the novel." In the original TOMB OF DRACULA, as in the new version, Marv says, "My concentration was on people and on how evil affected people, and that made it a very different kind of book from anything else I'd done. It was also probably the only book I ever wrote with my own voice."

Marv's perception of Dracula has changed considerably since he did the original series. "When we decided to do this version of it, I sat down and tried to think of what Dracula would be today, eleven years after I had done it previously. I decided to play him much more as an aspect of evil than as a physical character. Obviously, as a character he's important, but he's much more today a representation of darkness than he was in the past. His effect on people eleven years later is much stronger." Indeed, Dracula in the new TOMB is like a primal; force of evil, his violence, ferocity, and sexuality all more strongly portrayed than before. "Today the horror market has gone far beyond anything we ever did in being graphic," Marv says. "I don't like the graphic violence that much, but I do like the freedom to go beyond the Comics Code to some degree, which means to have the characters act the way they should act, to do the things we were not permitted to do back then."

But for all of Dracula's power, he finds himself in a way lost in this world of the 1990s. Marv notes that the world is changing at an ever more rapid pace in this society, not just in terms of technological advance but also politically with the collapse of authoritarian Communism in Europe. Dracula has to try to adjust to this new world and he reacts by lashing out furiously against it.

But the new TOMB OF DRACULA is not really about the title character, important though he is to the story. "The story is actually about Frank," Marv asserts. "Here is this man who in the original series was a loser. He was going to commit suicide, but he was saved by this woman who was totally insane." This woman was Rachel van Helsing, the granddaughter of Dr. Abraham van Helsing, Dracula's principal nemesis in the original Bram Stoker novel. Having witnessed Dracula's murder of her parents when she was a child, Rachel grew up passionately determined to destroy Dracula and his vampiric kind. "Frank followed her essentially because he lusted after her. She was incapable of showing any emotion except for one and that was hatred toward Dracula."

Dracula was destroyed, Rachel died, and Frank eventually embarked on his new life with his new wife Marlene. But then, as the new TOMB series opens, everything goes wrong. Dracula returns, and Marlene becomes possessed changing in personality. "I had no idea when I wrote it three years ago that GODFATHER III was being prepared, but," Marv observes, "Frank undergoes the twist of fate as Michael Corleone in that film: "just as soon as he got out, they drag him back in. Just as soon as he had created his own life to some degree, he's sucked right back into the horror. The woman he loves is now somebody he doesn't know. She has scarred herself to look like Rachel; she has been taken over; she is leading him into an area that he has worked very hard to get away from, to forget, and to get better. The problem is that he never really did."

Frank was not there when Quincy Harker killed Dracula in the final issue of TOMB OF DRACULA; Frank thus had nothing to do with ridding the world of his enemy. Moreover, Marv adds, "He never fully admitted that Rachel was quite sick. He just followed her as he followed Quincy, and he took their quest and made it his. But he had no quest of his own until he was sucked into this situation."

In the course of these events, Frank once again encounters his former ally, Blade, the vampire hunter. But, Marv declares, "Blade is a reminder of the past for him, and he has to break away from Blade. He has to break away from the past once and for all. These people — Blade, Rachel, Quincy, the vampire hunters — have dedicated their lives to it and ultimately destroyed their lives because of it.

"Now he must find out what Frank Drake is about. He finally has to come to grips with whatever led him to the bridge in TOMB OF DRACULA #3 and made him want to commit suicide. He never solved that problem. This is a story about Frank Drake's redemption. The whole storyline is about somebody reclaiming his soul."

— Peter Sanderson

Turn on the lights and enjoy the 5 page preview of TOMB OF DRACULA!

MARLENE McKENNA, I AM NOT DEAD
NO MATTER WHAT YOU MAY HAVE HEARD--
--HE DID NOT KILL ME.
GRAAAK
HARKER TRIED OH, HE EVEN SUCCEEDED, IF ONLY BRIEFLY
BUT I CANNOT BE SLAIN, NOT LIKE THAT

HE USED A SILVER SPOKE FROM HIS WHEEL CHAIR.
THAT CRIPPLED FOOL BUILT AN ARSENAL ABOUT HIMSELF WHILE I EXISTED ARMED ONLY WITH MY OWN WIT.
HE STABBED AT ME AGAIN AND AGAIN. BUT I WAS NOT DETERRED.
I WOULD NOT DIE, MARLENE.
OH, NO -- QUINCY HARKER WOULD PROVIDE THE NIGHT'S FEAST.

I LIVED.
LIVED AS I HAVE ALWAYS LIVED...
...UNDEAD!
I KEPT THE SILVER SPOKE AS A SOUVENIR OF SORTS.
VAN HELSING WAS HER NAME.
AND SHE IS DEAD, TOO.
THEY ARE ALL DEAD. ALL OF THEM
SO IS THE BLOOD OF THAT FOOLISH WOMAN WHO WASTED HER LIFE TRYING TO SEE ME DEAD.
UPON IT IS THE BLOOD OF THOSE I'VE SLAIN.
CARE TO TASTE IT, MARLENE? YOU COULD LICK AT HARKER'S STAIN. IT IS HERE.

PLEASE DO NOT RUN FROM ME, MARLENE I HAVE SPECIAL PLANS FOR YOU
AND I SO WANT TO SHARE THEM WITH YOU
I WANT TO GIVE YOU A PRIVILEGE FEW OTHERS HAVE KNOWN.
THE BLOOD OF MY ENEMIES...
TASTE IT, MARLENE.
TASTE THEIR DEFEAT. TASTE MY VICTORY.
NO? THEN PERHAPS WE SHOULD SHARE BLOOD.
PERHAPS WE SHOULD START WITH YOURS.

MMMMMM. ALL THAT I COULD HAVE HOPED FOR.
BUT IT IS NOT ENOUGH
WE MUST SHARE.
MY BLOOD NOW.
DELICIOUS, IS IT NOT?
SWEET NECTAR SWEET AMBROSIA
LIKE NOTHING YOU EVER IMAGINED.
NOW, MY DEAR, LET US CONSUMMATE OUR NEW LIAISON
THE TWO OF US, MARLENE
TOGETHER!
Oooooooh, scary!! He'll be coffin on that tomorrow! In the meantime, pick up TOMB OF DRACULA today!!

THE MARVEL® AGE OF COMICS 1984 PART FIVE

The Epic line of comics had begun two years before, but 1984 was the year in which the seeds so carefuly sown by Epic executive editor Archie Goodwin bore fruit. With four new Epic series, as well as three continuing books and two more on the drawing boards, Epic gave creators who wanted to own their characters a special place in the sun.

Epic's flagship title, DREADSTAR, presented the climax of 200-year war between the Monarchy and the Instrumentality — could Vanth Dreadstar defeat both sides and still survive? Writer/penciler Jim Starlin created some of his most memorable characters in the villainous Lord High Papal; the enigmatic Z; and the hero-villains, Infra-Red and Ultra-Violet.

In contrast to the interstellar adventure of DREADSTAR, Steve Englehart's COYOTE took place in the heat and mystery of the desert southwest. But both heroes fought against conspiracies; Coyote's task was to infiltrate the mysterious Shadow Cabinet! Highlights of the year: Coyote meeting a Road Runner, and the debut of artist Charles Truog.

The biggest debut of Epic's year, though, was certainly THE ALIEN LEGION: the longest-running series still published under the Epic banner! Creators Alan Zelenetz, Frank Cirocco, Terry Austin and Carl Potts wove tales of outer space action among soldiers from across the galaxy. Led by Capt. Sarigar, warriors like the heroic Torie Montroc and the ruthless Jugger Grimrod formed part of a battalion unique to the comics field.

Another major hit for Epic was the four-part SIX FROM SIRIUS, the Doug Moench-Paul Gulacy classic. Jakosa Lone and his band of space mercenaries agreed to rescue a single ambassador — not expecting to get involved in the intergalactic equivalent of the Cuban missile crisis! Now available in a trade paperback, it's the only Epic limited series to spawn an equally-exciting sequel.

As 1984 wound to a close, Epic presented two new books. SISTERHOOD OF STEEL was a Christy Marx-Mike Vosburg collaboration depicting a memorable cadre of female mercenaries in a sword-and-sorcery milieu. And Ron Harris's 4-part CRASH RYAN showed us an alternate history of World War II, in which the fantastic airships predicted by science fiction writers actually flew!

EPIC ILLUSTRATED, the magazine that started it all, showcased its usual remarkable array of artistic talent: Mike Kaluta, John Jay Muth, Lela Dowling, George Bush, Mark Bode, John Bolton, Chris Claremont, Charles Vess, Jim Starlin, Jeff Jones, and many more! Especially memorable were an appearance by Dave Sim's Cerebus the Aardvark; "The Potty's Over," a bizarre vignette by Berni Wrightson; and the continuing serials "Generation Zero" (by Archie Goodwin and Pepe Moreno) and "The Sacred and the Profane" (by Dean Motter and Ken Steacy). John Byrne and Terry Austin tantalized us with the first installments of "The Last Galactus Story" — a story left unfinished by the sad cancellation of EPIC in years to come.

BLIP, Marvel's magazine for video game enthusiasts, also ended its run in 1984. But those who looked to Marvel to publish the different and the unusual had little to fear. For instance, THE GENERIC COMIC was a direct-sales one-shot featuring a hero, a villain, a battle and a subplot, all presented by a writer, an artist, an inker, and an editor! Who else but Marvel would release this — or MARVEL FUMETTIS, a wacky collection of photographic humor starring the Bullpen madmen (and madwomen!).

Another unique one-shot that was rather more satisfying to fans of great storytelling was AMAZING HIGH ADVENTURE, which would prove so popular as to become an annual event of sorts. This first issue featured a tale of Spanish Conquistadors by Ann Nocenti and Tony Salmons, an exploit of Cromwell's England by Steve Englehart and John Severin, and much more.

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MARVEL® COMICS PRICE GUIDE

1984 was famous as the year George Orwell predicted we'd all be ruled by Big Brother. But what makes you think he was wrong? We here at Marvel happen to know, after all, what you're doing THIS VERY SECOND — you're reading this list of what back issue comics will cost you at your local comics specialty shop! Terrifying, no?? But remember: even though our source is Robert Overstreet's THE COMIC BOOK PRICE GUIDE #20, this is only a guide. Actual prices may vary, and should be lower for copies in fair or poor condition.

	CONDITION		
	Good	Fine	Mint
■ **ALIEN LEGION**			
1	.60	1.75	3.50
2-4	.35	1.00	2.00
■ **AMAZING HIGH ADVENTURE**			
1	.35	1.00	2.00
■ **BLIP**			
10	no price listed		
■ **COYOTE**			
3-8	.25	.75	1.50
■ **CRASH RYAN**			
1-3	.25	.75	1.50
■ **EPIC ILLUSTRATED**			
21-26	.25	.75	1.50
■ **GENERIC COMIC**			
1		.30	.60
■ **MARVEL FUMETTI BOOK**			
1		.40	.80
■ **MARVEL GRAPHIC NOVEL**			
10-13	1.00	3.00	6.00
■ **SISTERHOOD OF STEEL**			
1	.35	1.00	2.00
2-4	.30	.90	1.80

For especially inventive one-shots, however, the place to look was the still-young format entitled MARVEL GRAPHIC NOVELS. Rick Veitch crafted an unforgettable-science fiction saga in HEARTBURST! Its hero, Sunoco Firestone, lived on a planet whose religion and government were determined by ancient television broadcasts from Earth, which the denizens of Sunoco's world deemed to be messages from God (or the "Sponsor," as he was called). Sunoco's discovery of the secrets of his world endangered his life only slightly more than his love for the forbidden woman, Mala!

In DAZZLER: THE MOVIE, Alison Blaire's mutant powers were revealed to the world at last! Jim Shooter, Frank Springer and Vince Colletta wove a tale of the glamour and the seedy underside of the entertainment industry — and in the process, changed the Dazzler's life.

VOID INDIGO heralded the return to Marvel of Steve Gerber and Val Mayerik, in a savage tale of outer space and pre-history, of occult reincarnation and SF technology. This account of an alien who discovers he is a soul reborn from Earth's ancient past was originally pitched to DC as a way to remake Hawkman for the 1980s. And Elaine Lee's STARSTRUCK was originally an off-Broadway play, which became a Graphic Novel filled with ribaldry and intrigue as two of the toughest women in the cosmos ran amok in high style! Both of these Graphic Novels would become regular Epic Comics series in their own right in 1985 — the year we'll start covering next month! Be there! Aloha!

—Brian Nelson

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WEAVEWORLD™

I was thinking of a time when I dropped a coin onto the carpet of my living room. Bending down to pick up the mischievous coin, I became aware that the quarter I had lost, was indeed just that; lost. Scrambling around on all fours, I spent nearly fifteen minutes searching for the missing twenty-five cents. Now, I know that losing a quarter is not a traumatic event in many people's lives, but the thought that an object, which had traveled not more than four feet from my hand to the floor, could simply vanish, seemed to nag at me no end.

Wasting enough precious time, however, I decided to abandon my search, chalking this disappearance up to the same forces responsible for the abundance of unmatched socks in my dresser drawer, or the countless times I had supposedly misplaced my key chain, only to find it in the same place where I had thought it to be in the first place.

Then, not too long ago, I picked up a copy of Clive Barker's 1987 novel, "Weaveworld." I was enchanted by the fantastic idea that hidden within the woven threads of a carpet, could exist an entire world of beauty, magic, and evil. I began to think, "could my missing quarter somehow have slipped through the very fibers of my living room carpet into another world." My thirst for knowledge of the missing coin was sparked anew when writer, and in this case freelance editor, Dan Chichester asked me to help edit the latest Clive Barker novel adaption to be produced by Epic Comics, WEAVEWORLD.

Taking this opportunity as an omen, I gladly agreed to come aboard. If working on this project didn't quell my persistent perplexity, at least I would have the pleasure of working with the talents of artist Mike Manley, inker Ricardo Villagran, and writer Erik Saltzgaber. And of course the chance to work with Clive Barker was difficult to pass up.

Clive's epic fantasy in some ways can be compared to Lewis Carroll's classic *Alice in Wonderland*. When our hero, Cal Mooney, first encounters this strange new world, the event is reminiscent of Alice's realization of the world beyond the looking glass. The Weave, or the Fugue, as it is known by its inhabitants the seerkind, fills Cal with wonder, but he soon realizes that the price he may have to pay for paradise may be a dear one.

Cal is joined by Susanna Parrish, whose grandmother was, unknown to her, the custodian, or keeper of the carpet in the real world. Cal and Susanna soon realize that they are up against the greatest force to ever threaten the world of the Fugue, the evil Immacolata and her ghostly (and ghastly) sisters, the Hag and the Magdelene. This nefarious trio is aided by a human salesman named Shadwell. Shadwell's part in this story is simple. He is to round up all potential buyers of the carpet, to whom it will be auctioned. Shadwell will reap a great profit from this transaction, and the Immacolata, after the new owner awakens the hidden wonders of the Fugue, will repay the seerkind for making her an outcast.

At her death, Mimi Leschenski, Susanna's grandmother, gives Susanna a piece of the carpet. From this piece emerges five of the seerkind. Lilia, Frederick, Apolline, Jerichau, and Nimrod awake from a nearly eighty year sleep in the carpet. Upon realizing the threat of Immacolata and Shadwell, they aid Cal and Susanna in their quest for the preservation of the Fugue and the safety of the seerkind.

In an explosive confrontation at Shadwell's auction, Cal, Susanna and Immacolata engage in a fierce battle which climaxes in the release of the Fugue from its dormant state. Some of this band of seerkind and humans will not survive the wrath of Immacolata and Shadwell, but those who do must do whatever necessary to prevent these evil forces from taking power in the weave.

So far, working on WEAVEWORLD hasn't brought me any closer to solving the mystery that claimed my coin. Oh, I did find it eventually. One moving day, while moving my couch, the glint of a silvery object caught my eye. My lost quarter was found! The confounding conundrum was finally put to rest and my mind was now at ease. But, you know, George Washington bears an eerie resemblence to Cal Mooney.

—*Tom Daning*

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The LEGION of NIGHT™

"Different people call it different names — the unseen world, the spirit realm, the void indigo, the astral plane. I call it the kitchen," as Charles Blackwater's mother would say. Intrigued? That is but a small sample awaiting you in a 2-part, 64 page bookshelf format comic, entitled *Legion Of Night*. It's written by Steve Gerber (of MAN-THING and HOWARD THE DUCK fame) and illustrated by Whilce Portacio (X-FACTOR, UNCANNY X-MEN) and Scott Williams (PUNISHER, X-MEN).

What precisely is LEGION OF NIGHT? It's a tale of a bizarre cult known as the Fellowship, who are determined to awaken the Great Dragon Fin Fang Foom, and of Charles Blackwater, who discovers the terrifying truth behind this spiritual organization, but who is murdered before he can reveal their secret. However, after his demise, his body becomes the vessel for an entity known as the Legion.

LEGION OF NIGHT is truly a horror tale. It attacks and engulfs the reader on a physical and psychological level. The pacing is quick and exact, the art is angular and hard — perfectly suited to the visceral mood of the story. The progression of the story is not only seen but felt. Few stories grab the individual by the jugular, or maintain a relentless grip.

"I wanted to create tension through the meetings of the characters, each with a different agenda. This tension also creates conflict that is played throughout the story." As Steve Gerber said, "each character becomes representational of an aspect of the tale."

In writing this story, Steve wanted to create an underlying psychological thought, one which would make the world mysterious, a world with no answers. Charles Blackwater is a true success. His name is derived from a collection of horror anthologies entitled "Blackwater." Throughout history man has come to believe that water is the essence of purification, but we must ask ourselves, "is it really?" This water is black, muddled and shapeless. But Gerber makes us ask ourselves this question: Is water that pure, is anything still pure, are we not all tainted somehow? Charles Blackwater is amorphous in detail when alive, but becomes whole in death. This dichotomy is what keeps us enthralled throughout the entire story.

LEGION OF NGIHT is not without its share of humor. But its humor is derived from the dark complexity of the situation. This humor is not strained, it is created naturally. In talking with Steve, he related his trials and tribulations in seeing this project see print. This story began in 1987 as an anthology of Marvel's greatest monsters. And the genesis of the book would be Fin Fang Foom. Its style would be a 60s fun book, when all the material was light hearted and relaxed. But as the plot sessions with Ralph Macchio unfolded, both agreed that the material would be better dealt with, taken quite seriously. And *Legion* evolved into this, a grittier, nastier horror tale.

And Whilce Portacio wholeheartedly agrees. His word to describe this story is simply "strange." He went on to elaborate and state that Steve's writing is tight and very visual. Whilce said that this story really challenged him. The challenge of illustrating a flashback within a flashback was an ordeal unto itself. For Whilce to draw a sequence that unfolded into the next, was an opportunity for Whilce to try many new ways of telling the story as interestingly as possible.

To Whilce, a story, specifically one dealing with science fiction (his personal favorite) succeeds if upon reading the story out loud, he asks himself can he visualize this, can he capture the emotional aspect of the story? Whilce said that with Steve's story that it all poured out of him. That any time that he walked away from the story, and reread it, he would find something completely different. But the story essentially stayed the same. Whilce bases his visual representations on the physical, not the surreal. This seems to have grounded this horror story in a reality base, which is used as a springboard for the horror.

It's interesting to note, that talking with these two gentlemen and inquiring about their specific interpretations of the story, that both men interpreted the story so similarly. *Can both men be the same?*

LEGION OF NIGHT is not solely a horror story, but a psychological and intellectual tale with twists, turns, and tangles. This story in its ascension will easily draw a large audience of comic fans eager for something new and horrific.

—Tony Matias

WE HAVE NOT YET BEGUN TO WRITE

Send your letters to: **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE, c/o Marvel Comics Group, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016.**
Attention Correspondents: All letters to be considered for publication must include your complete name and address, though we will gladly withhold that info on request!

The title of this month's letter column is a patently patriotic salute from Chris Beverwyk of Chicago, IL. Thanks a lot, Chris!

But as for the rest of you out there, don't give up the ship! We still need a newer and niftier title for this column each and every month, so if you've got any ideas kicking around in the back of your brain, well, shake 'em loose and send 'em on in! If we use your idea, we'll even thank you right here in front of everybody! Almost as good as a Congressional medal of honor, isn't it?

Actually, this month's title is quite appropriate indeed. Because this time around, we're going to do something special. We've gathered up a bunch of recent letters that pose some of our most frequently asked questions. We haven't addressed any of these issues for quite a while, so we figured it's darned well about time to "begin to write" right here! And so, without any further ado, here we go!

Dear MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE,

I am writing this letter for a number of reasons. It would be nice if you printed it because I have a lot of questions that I need answers to. First off, I was wondering if Marvel is open to suggestions for new characters and art from amateurs like myself. I've got some great ideas about a character that I thought up. He's really cool, and I'd like to see him go up against Thanos or Galactus or one of those cosmic entities.

Another question I have is if Marvel can send out back issues. I really need THANOS QUEST and IRON MAN #55. (Yes, I do like Thanos, and if anyone reading this letter is selling those issues, please tell me!)

And on a final note, I have a suggestion that you show a major battle between all the heroes and villains. And do it in the present time, unlike the storyline over at your Distinguished Competition. And I hope that the major death of a hero . . . er . . . I mean, the death of a major hero will happen in THE INFINITY GAUNTLET. It is time for a big change in the Marvel Universe.

So, until I stop asking about those Thanos back issues, or until Wolverine guest stars on Pee Wee's Playhouse, whichever comes first — or last, Make Mine Thano . . . I mean, Marvel! (Whew, talk about long sentences.)

Daniel "Thanos" Melvin
1930 Hamrock Drive
Powell, OH 43065

Wolverine on *Pee Wee's Playhouse*, eh? Tres cool idea, Daniel: "Remember, kids, today's secret word is 'Snikt!"

Anyhow, just for the heck of it, let's answer your questions in reverse order:

Your suggestion about a major battle between all of Marvel's heroes and villains sounds remarkably like a couple of limited series that we published a few years back: MARVEL SUPER HEROES SECRET WARS and its sequel, the cleverly-titled SECRET WARS II. Each one featured more heroes and villains than you could shake a demonic trident at, and they also introduced the galaxy-spanning Beyonder to boot! You might want to check your local comics specialty shop to see if they have any back issues.

In fact, while you're there, you can also check to see if they have the other back issues you were asking about. You see, Marvel doesn't have the facilities to sell back issues of our comic books, mainly because we don't have all that many copies ourselves. Heck, we have enough trouble getting the new books out on time! Of course, if you don't have a comics specialty shop in your area, there are other options too. You may find that some enterprising fellow in your area is holding a comics convention where you can find assorted dealers who'd love to sell you the comic books you want. Or you could always order them through the mail from one of the back-issue dealers who advertise in the pages of many Marvel titles. The options might not be exactly endless, but you do have a lot of routes you can go.

Finally, as for your question about new characters and artists, well, just keep reading . . .

Wait a second — everything's suddenly gone yellow! And that can only mean one of two things: Either we're up against Killgrave the Purple Man's cousin, Leo the Yellow Guy, or it's time for our LETTER OF THE MONTH! You guessed it — once again, we've searched through our voluminous sacks of mail for a letter that we think will be of particular interest to Marvelites far and wide.

This time around, we've picked *two* Letters of the Month, because together, they address one of our most frequently raised topics . . .

Dear MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE,,

I'm an amateur writer and I've been a fan of Marvel Comics for many years. I've written a few stories which feature Marvel characters in addition to other stories which feature my own characters. I would very much like to know how to submit some of my work to you.

In my opinion, the Marvel Universe is the most interesting and entertaining fictional world ever created. To be able to create stories (and characters) within this world would be a dream come true for me.

What I'd like to know is what impor-

tant criteria I should be aware of before sending anything in.

Thanks for your time!

Anthony Abeles
506 Staples Street
Farmingdale, NY 11735

Dear MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE,

I'd like to finally set the record straight. If you're interested in becoming a comic book writer, how do you do so? I've read something about using the MARVEL TRY OUT BOOK. Well, I live in Canada, and I've never seen one. Another popular answer is to send a two-page summary to Marvel. Does this include dialogue or should it be a synopsis like the ones found in THE OFFICIAL MARVEL INDEX TO THE X-MEN? One other suggestion I've heard is to bring your materials to conventions and present them to current writers/editors.

One more thing: If MARVEL AGE prints work by aspiring artists, I believe it should do the same for writers. Equal rights.

I hope to have these questions resolved shortly. Thanks for listening.

Until the Blob gets liposuction, Make Mine Marvel!

Duncan Fraser
Ottawa, CA

Hmmm . . . Are you guys *sure* you want to write comic books? We mean, sure, you get to hobnob with all those beautiful starlets, but what we really want to do is direct.

Actually, Duncan's already gone a good ways toward explaining the particulars. We would indeed recommend that you guys — or anyone interested in a creative-type job at Marvel (be it writer, penciler, inker, letterer, or colorist) — see if you can track down a copy of THE OFFICIAL MARVEL COMICS TRY-OUT BOOK. It's a handy guide to the sort of stuff Marvel looks for, the materials to use, and how to submit your work to us.

In the meantime, though, here are some of the basics for writers and pencilers:

Writers should send synopses of the plots of their stories. These synopses should be no longer than one or two pages, because otherwise, our hard working submissions editor, Pat Garrahy, just wouldn't be able to get through the mountain of submissions we receive every day. The synopsis can include bits of dialogue if you want, Duncan, but bear in mind that that'll leave less room for you to summarize the plot.

As for art submissions, Anthony, you should send in a couple of pages showing panel-by-panel continuity. You should *not* send in pin-ups or cover shots, because one of the main things that we look for in evaluating art samples is storytelling ability. And we can't tell how well you can tell a story if we only have one picture to look at.

Whether you're sending in a plot or art samples, guys, your submissions should feature established Marvel characters, *not your own creations.* The reason for this requirement is fairly simple: We need to know how well you can handle *our* characters, and we can't find that out unless you include some of them in your samples.

When you've got your submissions together, you can indeed bring them down to a comics convention to show to one of our editors. Or if you'd prefer, you can mail them to the following address:

Submissions Editor
Marvel Comics Group
387 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10016

Do *not* send them to MARVEL AGE itself. We're not the people who evaluate submissions, and it'll just take that much longer for us to forward your samples along. (Of course, we do feature work by creators that we think are almost up to a professional level in our New Talent section, though. And in response to your point, Duncan, we're featuring the work of aspiring writers in this very issue's Mark's Remarks and New Talent Department columns!

One way or another, though, please be patient. Because we get so many submissions, it'll probably take some time for you to get a reply. But don't worry — you will get one sooner or later.

Oh, and one last, important note, guys: Good Luck!

Dear guys at Marvel,

I am new to comic book collecting and only have about twenty five comic books, most of which I got for Christmas. Among the ones I got for Christmas was a copy of MARVEL TALES #240 featuring Spider-Man and the Beast. At least, that's what I thought it was. When I opened it up, I found that it was a CONAN THE BARBARIAN comic book that didn't even mention Spider-Man or the Beast! Being new to comic book collecting, I don't know if that makes my comic valuable or not, but if it is, could you please advise me what to do with it and how much it's worth?

Eric Sutton
RD 3, Box 473
Ebensburg, PA 15931

Wow, Eric! You mean you found the million-dollar copy of MARVEL TALES #240?!

No, no, just kidding. But printing errors do make for interesting oddities; sometimes, a comic book gets printed with two covers or even the wrong cover altogether. We've heard a lot of different opinions regarding the value of such comic books, some people saying that they're worth more than an errorless copy because of their curiosity value, while others maintain that they're not. We've always found them pretty neat ourselves.

So basically, Eric, the bottom line is that, like with most business-type things in life, your comic book is worth whatever people will pay for it. If you want to make sure that it stays in good condition until you can use it to pay for your grandchildren's college education, we'd suggest that you keep it in a mylar comic book bag; these bags are specially designed to protect your comics from the ravages of time (not to mention parsley, sage and rosemary). There are a number of companies that specialize in those sorts of things and some of them advertise fairly regularly in various Marvel Comics.

ANSWERS TO MARVEL® TRIVIA QUIZ

1. **B**	5. **C**	9. **C**
2. **D**	6. **B**	10. **A**
3. **A**	7. **A**	11. **B**
4. **A**	8. **C**	12. **C**

MORE MARVEL EDITORS CARDS!

In MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE #104, we printed a whole batch of Marvel Editors Trading Cards, which are available to you — free — at a whole bunch of conventions across the country this summer. Well, we were immediately besieged with requests to run more and more of them, since Marveloids are finding it difficult to collect an entire set.

So here you go, batch number two of the Marvel Editors Trading cards. We'll keep running them in future MARVEL AGE issues until we get everybody in. We hope you enjoy 'em, and we'll see you next issue!

—Mike Lackey

MARVEL AGE SUPER SHOPPER GALLERY

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466-4213
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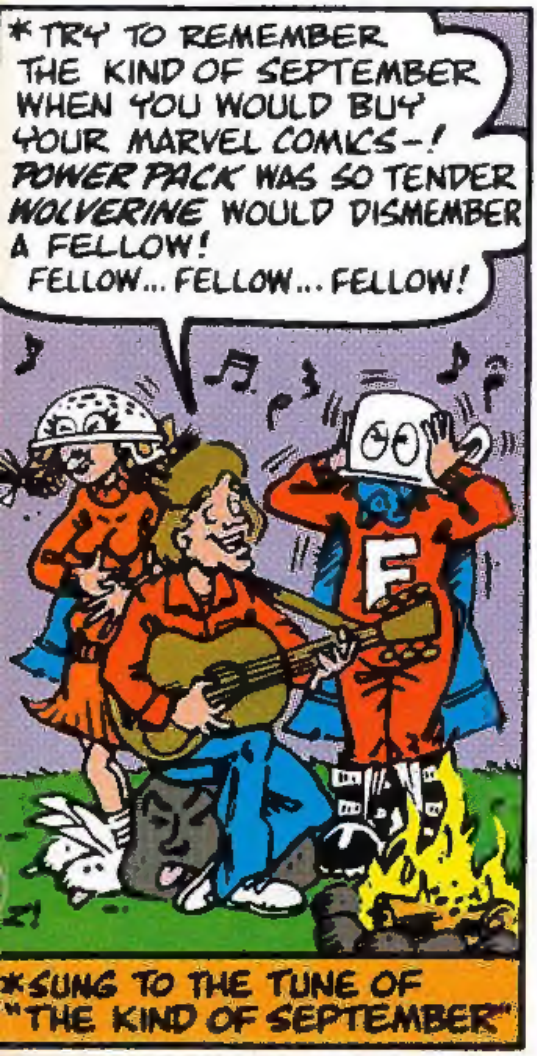
THE 1991 MARVEL AGE® CALENDAR

September

WRITER: MIKE LACKEY
ARTIST: RON ZALME
COLORIST: RENEE WITTERSTAETTER


*TRY TO REMEMBER THE KIND OF SEPTEMBER WHEN YOU WOULD BUY YOUR MARVEL COMICS-! POWER PACK WAS SO TENDER WOLVERINE WOULD DISMEMBER A FELLOW! FELLOW... FELLOW... FELLOW!
*SUNG TO THE TUNE OF "THE KIND OF SEPTEMBER"

WEDNESDAY
THURSDAY
FRIDAY
SATURDAY
HBD TO KEN LOPEZ!
24
HBD TO MARVEL AGE'S OWN SHOLLY FISCH!
MIKE ZECK WAS BORN TODAY!
6
HBD TO EDITOR ROB TOKAR!
FOOLKILLER SEZ:
♪ OH, RICK... RICK JOOOOONES!
11
12
IMPY--FORBIE! YOU TELL THAT FOOL RICK JONES I'M GUNNIN' FOR HIM!
YESSIR!!
13
JIM NOVAK'S B-DAY
14
SPIDER-MAN! YOU CURED ME--I'M NO LONGER THE LIZARD!
13
THAT'S OKAY, DOC! NO 'ARM DONE!
19
OH, JOOO-OOONES!
20
BLACKJACK!
FOOLKILLER?! THAT SHLUB? DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH!
25
IT'S MARVEL AGE DESIGNER DAWN GEIGER'S B-DAY!
26
HBD TO COLORIST BOB SHARON FROM DR. MARTIN!
27
28
I MEAN--I'VE TRIED TO BE GOOD!
NO FOOLIN'!
--IMPY! TELL HIM I'M NO FOOL! NOSIREE!! I WANNA LIVE TO BE 103!
HE CALLED YOU A SHLUB.